

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-09

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R 160607Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1069

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MOPS, MU

SUBJECT: CORRESPONDENT'S VIEW OF DHOFAR WAR, MID-APRIL 1975

1. CAIRO-BASED LOS ANGELES TIMES CORRESPONDENT JACK FOISIE SHARED WITH EMBASSY FOLLOWING COMMENTS ON HIS APRIL 12-14 DHOFAR VISIT. ITINERARY INCLUDED ROAD TRIP FROM SALALAH TO MIDWAY; HELICOPTER FLIGHTS TO SIMBA, RAKHYUT, SO-CALLED HAMMER AREA NEAR HORNBEAM LINE, AND TAWI ATAIR; AND AUDIENCE WITH SULTAN. FOISIE FULL OF PRAISE FOR TRIP FACILITIES OFFERED BY MININFO AND BY SAF (BRITISH) LEADERSHIP, FOR WHICH TO SOME DEGREE HE CAN THANK FACT THAT SIMULTANEOUS PRESENCE OF THREE JOURNALISTS FROM GERMAN PERIODICAL "STERN" PROMPTED OMANGOV TO SET UP EXCELLENT GROUP TRAVEL AND OTHER ARRANGEMENTS FOR ALL FOUR.

A. THE WAR GOES ON. FOISIE'S CENTRAL IMPRESSION WAS THAT, CONTRARY TO REASSURING THEME OF ADVANCE BRIEFINGS AT SAF HEADQUARTERS MUSCAT AND DHOFAR BRIGADE HQ SALALAH WHICH INDICATED WAR IN EAST AND CENTRAL SECTORS PRACTICALLY WON, FIGHTING IS NOT YET OVER EVEN THERE. HE ALLUDED TO TWO OR THREE RECENT INCIDENTS OF HELICOPTER LOSS OR DAMAGE BY

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GROUNDFIRE FROM ISOLATED RESISTANCE POCKETS IN EASTERN SECTOR, AND TO SPORADIC ABMUSHES AND ROAD-MININGS. ALSO SAID STRIKE-

MASTERS ARE AGAIN REGULARLY FLYING COVER FOR HELICOPTER SUPPLY FLIGHTS TO VARIOUS CENTERS TO PREVENT INTERDICTION BY ISOLATED ENEMY GROUND UNITS. HE WAS IMPRESSED BY DETERMINED, AROUND-THE-CLOCK EFFORT BEING MADE TO IMPROVE MAIN SALALAH-MIDWAY ROAD AND SEVERAL SECONDARY ROADS ABOVE AND THROUGH JABAL REGION.

B. HAWKER HUNTERS/JORDANIANS. FOISIE SAW DOZEN OR SO HUNTERS AT MIDWAY BEING PREPARED FOR ACTION AND PAINTED WITH OMANI COLORS. HE WAS TOLD THAT BESIDES FOUR SECONDED JORDANIAN PILOTS, THEY SOON WILL HAVE FOUR RAF PILOTS AND FOUR CONTRACTED BRITISH PILOTS. SOAF PERSONNEL AT MIDWAY SAID JAGUAR AIRCRAFT WOULD BE ON HAND WITHIN TWO YEARS. PARTY WAS BRIEFED EFFICIENTLY "IN PURE US ARMY FASHION" BY JORDANIAN UNITS ALONG ROAD TO MIDWAY.

C. IRANIANS. FOISIE'S REQUEST TO VISIT AN IRANIAN UNIT WENT UNANSWERED, WHICH HE UNDERSTANDS (CORRECTLY) IS STANDARD IRANIAN POLICY HERE VIS-A-VIS FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS. HE OBSERVED THEM ONLY IN DISTANCE AT GUARD OUTPOSTS ON HILLS SURROUNDING TOWN OF RAKHYUT. HE SAID CIVILIAN FAMILIES HAVE NOT YET RETURNED TO RAKHYUT WHICH WAS TAKEN BY IRANIANS THREE MONTHS AGO.

D. SIMBA. HE CONFIRMED ALL RE-SUPPLY TO THIS FAR WESTERN SAF OUTPOST STILL BEING CONDUCTED BY COPTERS, AS ENEMY GROUND FIRE MAKES CARIBOU OR OTHER FIXED-WING SUPPLY FLIGHTS UNSAFE.

2. FOISIE SAID LITTLE OF NOTE CAME FROM HIS PRIVATE AUDIENCE WITH SULTAN QABOOS, WHO RESPONDED ORALLY TO SEVERAL QUESTIONS SUBMITTED FEW DAYS IN ADVANCE. ANSWERING ONE ABOUT USG REQUEST FOR MARIRAH LANDING RIGHTS, SULTAN ASSERTED CONSULTATIONS ARE IN PROGRESS BUT THAT THEY HAVE BEEN SLOW TO DEVELOP. (ASKED HIS VIEWS ON PROPER ROLE OF WOMEN IN MODERN OMAN, QABOOS ENDORSED THEIR PATTERN OF STEADY UNOBTRUSIVE GAINS IN EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND POSITIONS OF PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY WHILE POINTEDLY NOTING THAT HE HIMSELF IS "NOT MARRIED YET.")

3. REMARKING THAT SE ASIA PRESENTLY HOGGING NEWSPAPER SPACE,  
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FOISIE SAID HE THEREFORE EXPECTS TO WRITE VERY LITTLE COPY FROM HIS TEN-DAY OMANI VISIT, WHICH WILL ALSO INCLUDE APRIL 16 VISIT TO MUSANDAM, BUT HAS FOUND IT INVALUABLE FOR BACK-GROUND.  
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